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Black Heritage Stamp Series: Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable

United States Postal Service. Stamp Division

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Issue Date: February 20, 1987

First Day City: Chicago, Illinois

Designer: Thomas Blackshear,
Novato, California

Art Director: Jerry Pinkney, Citizens'
Stamp Advisory Committee

Typographer: Bradbury Thompson, Design
Coordinator, Citizens'
Stamp Advisory Committee

Modeler: Esther Porter

Process: Gravure

Colors: Magenta, cyan, yellow, black tone
and black type

Image Area: .84 x 1.44 inches or
21.33 x 36.57 millimeters

Plate Numbers: One group of five digits

Stamps per Pane: 50

Selva: ©U.S. Postal Service 1986
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Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable Commemorative Stamp

A 22-cent commemorative stamp honoring the founder of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable, was issued February 20 in Chicago, Illinois. The dedication ceremony was held in the Richard J. Daley Civic Center. The stamp is the 10th issue in the Black Heritage Series, which was initiated in 1978 with the 13-cent Harriet Tubman stamp.

The design was prepared by artist Thomas Blackshear of Novato, California. The Du Sable rendering is Mr. Blackshear's first stamp design. Because there are no known "from life" likenesses of Du Sable, several artists' conceptions of Du Sable were reviewed by Blackshear before he prepared his original painting. The conceptions and other background material were provided by Chicago's Du Sable Museum of African American History.

Believed to have been born in Haiti to a black mother and a French mariner-trader, Du Sable was a general merchant, fur trader, farmer and man of affairs in the frontier community he fashioned on the banks of the Chicago river about 1773.

His trading post included a 40' x 22' dwelling, a size almost unheard of in that relative wilderness; two barns; a mill; a bakehouse; a poultry house, and large livestock holdings.

Du Sable later acquired a house on 30 acres in Peoria and received a government grant for another 400 acres before selling his holdings in 1800 and moving to St. Charles, Missouri, to live with his son. He died in 1818.



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES

Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable



Around the year 1773, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable settled on the shores of Lake Michigan near the mouth of a river the local Indians called *Checagou*. There, he built a trading post and cabin, the first permanent buildings on the site of what would become the third largest city in the United States—Chicago.

This year marks the sesquicentennial of Chicago, one of the great cities of

North America. In honor of its first settler, the United States Postal Service is proud to issue this commemorative stamp, the tenth in the Black Heritage Series.



Historians know little about Du Sable's life, except what can be learned from the written recollections of other early pioneers. It is believed that he was born in Haiti around 1745, the son of a French sea merchant and a Haitian woman. Soon after the death of his father, Du Sable sailed to Louisiana, later moving north to what is now Illinois. As a fur trader, Du Sable won the respect of Europeans and Indians alike as he traveled up the Mississippi River. He was well educated and urbane, a tall, striking figure, impressive to those he met.

With his Potawatomi Indian wife, Kit-tihawa, Du Sable established his trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River. He recognized the importance of the site as

a vital link between the trade routes of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. As he prospered, his name became well-known to other settlers and to the local Indians, who considered him their representative when dealing with the Europeans.

In later years, Du Sable moved his family to a farm near Peoria. Although he never returned to the settlement at Chicago, his small outpost would grow into a huge metropolis, home to millions.

Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable died in 1818, in St. Charles, Missouri. The stamp honoring him was designed by Thomas Blackshear of Novato, California. It was issued February 20, 1987, in Chicago, Illinois.





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First Day of Issue
Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable Stamp
Chicago, Illinois
February 20, 1987

Presiding

Janet Norfleet
General Manager/Postmaster
South Suburban Division

Presentation of Colors

Du Sable High School ROTC

National Anthem

Du Sable High School Band
Director: Timothy Galloway

Invocation

Reverend George H. Clements
Pastor
Holy Angels Church

**Welcome and Introduction
of Distinguished Guests**

Fred Fine
Commissioner
Department of Cultural Affairs
Chicago Office of Fine Arts

Remarks

Honorable R. Eugene Pincham
Chairman, Advisory Board
Checagou, Du Sable, Ft. Dearborn
Historical Commission

Honorable Harold Washington
Mayor of Chicago

Musical Selections

Du Sable High School Mixed Choir
Director: Mrs. Dianne Blocker
Chairperson, Du Sable High School
Music Department: Mrs. Betty Stell

**Address and Presentation
of Albums**

Jerry K. Lee, Sr.
Regional Postmaster General
Central Region

Benediction

Reverend Archie Hargraves
President
Checagou, Du Sable, Ft. Dearborn
Historical Commission

Honored Guests

Jacquelyn S. Alton
President
Chicago Philatelic Society

Thomas R. Blackshear
Designer of Stamp

Dr. Margaret Burroughs
Commissioner
Chicago Park District

Amina Dickerson
Director, The Du Sable Museum
of African American History

Sally Johnson
Director, Mayor's Office
of Inquiry and Information

John R. Kelly
Commissioner
Checagou, Du Sable, Ft. Dearborn
Historical Commission

Ron B. Watkins
Executive Director
Checagou, Du Sable, Ft. Dearborn
Historical Commission

Lois Weisberg
Executive Director
Mayor's Office of Special Events

Leroy Wesaw
Tribal Councilman
Potawatomi Indian Nation



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

What of this man, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable? Only a few notes from travelers and fellow traders and British officers, along with some legal documents, survive to offer testimony to his deeds and his character.

His probable courage and fortitude and intelligence perhaps would attest to just another small wilderness success...the tale of a trapper and trader who somehow carved prosperity and a small community out of land on the Midwest frontier in Revolutionary times.

But Du Sable was a black man who made a name and a place for himself at a time when most could not. And his vision and vigor created not just any community, but one that grew to be the cornerstone of America's heartland—the city of Chicago.

For those reasons, the Postal Service is proud to issue the Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable stamp, 10th in the Black Heritage Series. The Du Sable issue is the first stamp design created by artist Thomas Blackshear of Novato, California.



Jean Baptiste Du Sable
Black Heritage Series



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Rodney Lawrence Hurst Sr.
Thomas G Carpenter
Special Collections

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